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FOLLOWING FLOWS: GEOGRAPHIES OF TOURISM PERFORMANCES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, explorations of tourism as performance have challenged representational readings of tourism, where bodies and places often end up being reduced to ‘travelling eyes’, by making ethnographies of what humans, institutions and non-humans do – enact and stage – in order to make tourism and performances happen. The ‘performance turn’ has made tourism studies an exciting and lively research field for cultural geographers dissatisfied with purely representational accounts of ‘social’ and ‘material’ worlds. The aim of this article is to consolidate this approach in tourism studies and in cultural geography more generally by making a *methodological* contribution. In particular, the article elaborates on the growing numbers of studies using ethnographic-inspired methods to analyse tourism performances. The justification for doing this is that ‘ethnographies’ have proved successful in analysing embodied tourism performances within a particular sight/site, but unsuccessful in following flows of performances between and across sites. Ethnographies of tourism performances have largely neglected the networked mobilities of objects, images, texts and technologies that permit tourism performances to take place and to be represented and (re)circulated across often great distances at various sites and times. Inspired by ‘multi-sited ethnographies’ and what John Urry has recently called ‘mobile methods’,¹ this article develops what could be called a repertoire of ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ and discusses the implications of such an approach for the study of performances of *tourists*.

The article examines this through discussions of how such ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ may be used in tracing contemporary mass tourists and how their performances tie together a multiplicity of flows and sites.

INTRODUCTION

Inspired by recent work on non-representational geography and theory,² cultural geographies of tourism has seen a welcome shift from representations to practices and performances. Like much cultural geography, many cultural accounts of tourism have been trapped within a representational world of ‘place myths’³ and the ‘semiological realisation of space’⁴. The ‘performance turn’ has challenged such representational readings of tourism, where bodies and places often end up being reduced to ‘travelling eyes’ by making ethnographies of what humans, institutions and non-humans do – enact and stage – in order to make tourism and performances happen. By shifting the focus to ontologies of acting and doing,⁵ the corporeality of tourist bodies and their creative potentials, as well as the significance of technologies and the material affordances of places, have been exposed. Thus, ‘the performance turn’ has turned tourism studies into an exciting and lively research field for cultural geographers who are dissatisfied with purely representational accounts of ‘social’ and ‘material’ worlds.

While geographical discussions of performance and non-representational theory have sparked rich conceptual discussions, they have made fewer methodological innovations. The aim of this article is to consolidate performance and non-representational approaches in tourism studies and cultural geography more generally by making a *methodological* contribution. In particular, this article elaborates on the growing numbers of studies that use ethnographic-inspired methods to analyse tourism

performances. The justification for doing this is that ‘ethnographies’ have proved successful in analysing embodied tourism performances within a particular sight/site, but unsuccessful in following flows of performances between and across sites. While to some degree they do account for how ‘local’ performances are staged by far-reaching flows, they are most often traditional *single*-site ethnographies and overly concerned with humans. They have also been somewhat ‘a-mobile’, as they have mainly observed passing flows within *single* sites. Ethnographies of tourism performances have largely neglected the networked mobilities of objects, images, texts and technologies that permit tourism performances to take place and to be represented and (re)circulated across often great distances at various sites and times.

This article ‘mobilises’ tourism ethnographies by promoting and bringing together what Marcus calls ‘multi-sited ethnographies’⁶ and what Urry has more recently called ‘mobile methods’.⁷ Although Urry does not discuss multi-sited ethnography as a source of inspiration for ‘mobile methods’, these two ‘methods’ have similarities. Both are concerned with ‘following flows’ of diverse mobilities of people, objects, images, place myths and so on, in and across multiple sites, in order to highlight how ‘local’ performances and places are in part constituted through ‘distant’ flows and mobilities. Both have an agenda of mobilising the social sciences in order to overcome sedentary approaches to places and dwelling without at the same time promoting a nomadic metaphysic.⁸ Inspired by this, in this article we develop what we term ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ and discuss what implications ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ have for the study of performances of *tourists*.

The article begins with a brief review of the ‘performance turn’ in tourism studies. We discuss how this ‘turn’ has crafted illuminating non-representational

ethnographies of embodied tourism performances, but we also argue that the accounts are insufficiently mobile and fluid. This leads us to consider how the growing body of studies using a *multi*-sited approach in consumer studies and ethnography,⁹ coupled with mobile methods, enable ‘mobile tourism ethnographers’ that can ‘follow flows’ of multiple mobilities across the various sites and times they are tied into, produced, consumed and circulated through. Discussions of multi-sited ethnography and mobile methods are often abstract and do not specify how they can be used in actual research. To avoid this and move this article beyond the conceptual, the final section is a discussion of how we intend to use a ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ approach to research Danish mass tourism performances in Egypt and Turkey.

THE ‘PERFORMANCE TURN’ IN TOURISM STUDIES

From the late 1990s onwards, a ‘performance turn’ can be traced in tourism theory and research concerned with diverse practices such sightseeing, photographing, dwelling on the beach, and staging heritage landscapes. This turn is evident in research books¹⁰ and articles¹¹ and even mainstream textbooks on methodology.¹² Given the danger of neglecting differences, it is justifiable to speak of a turn because these otherwise heterogeneous contributions share some important departures with classical mainstream tourism theories.

The ‘performance turn’ dislocates attention from symbolic meanings and discourses to embodied, collaborative and technologised *doings* and *enactments*. Drawing inspiration from dramaturgical sociology in seeing tourist staff and tourists as expressive performers¹³ and non-representational geography’s attention to embodied, technologised everyday practices,¹⁴ these writings reinstall the body and the

corporeality and expressiveness of performance by stressing the significance of embodied encounters with other bodies, technologies and material places.¹⁵

This illustrates how the ‘performance turn’ is also inspired by current calls for a renewed engagement with the ‘material’ in cultural geography. Like much cultural geography, tourism studies have melted everything solid into signs. Despite the fact that tourists routinely engage with multiple material cultures, tourism studies has largely failed to understand the significance of materiality, objects and material/digital networks for ‘human’ performances. Studies of tourist sites/sights and performances have generally been overly concerned with ‘humans’, thus neglecting the role of ‘non-humans’.¹⁶ The ‘performance turn’ emphasises that ‘things’ are crucial in tourism performances, primarily because they have a *use value* that enhances the physicality of the body and enables it to do things and sense realities that would otherwise be beyond its capabilities. It stresses the inescapable hybridity of ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman’ worlds.

In contrast to representational studies that often portray tourism as an over-determined stage with no space for creativity, self-expression or the unexpected, the ‘performance turn’ insists on uncovering creativity, playfulness, multiple desires and productive practices as much as choreographies and scripts.¹⁷ Tourism performances are surely choreographed by concrete guidance and cultural scripts, but tourists are not just written upon, they also enact and inscribe space with their own ‘stories’.

Performances are never determined by their choreographing, since there is always an element of unpredictability. This is evident in Tim Edensor’s seminal work in which performances are seen as potentially creative, although he simultaneously stresses the unreflexive, unintentional enactments of tourists. This is in contrast with notions of

tourism as a liminal zone where everyday conventions about proper behaviour are said to be more or less suspended:

Rather than transcending the mundane, most forms of tourism are fashioned by culturally coded escape attempts. Moreover, although suffused with notions of escape from normativity, tourists carry quotidian habits and responses with them: they are part of their baggage.¹⁸

The 'performance turn' *explicitly* sees tourism as intricately tied up with everyday practices and significant others, such as family members and friends. Tourism theories and studies tend to overlook the fact that few tourists experience the world through a solitary 'romantic gaze' or as a solitary flâneur. Most tourists not only bring their own bodies but travel with other bodies too: tourism performances, such as photographing, map-finding and building a sandcastle, are collaborative practices.¹⁹ In much tourism writing, places are presumed to be relatively fixed, given, passive and separate from those touring them. The 'performance turn' destabilizes such static and fixed conceptions of places and sites. Instead places and performances are conceived as non-stable and contingent enactments. Edensor argues:

The nature of the stage is dependent on the kinds of performance enacted upon it. For even carefully stage-managed spaces may be transformed by the presence of tourists who adhere to different norms. Thus stages can continually change, can expand and contract. For most stages are ambiguous, sites for different performances.²⁰

Like this, tourism performances are not separated from the places where they happen; they are not taking place in inert and fixed places. Tourist places are produced places, and tourists are co-producers of such places. They are performances of place that partly produce, transform places and connect them to other places. Most tourist places are 'dead' until actors take the stage and enact them: they become alive and transformed each time that new plays begin, face-to-face proximities are established and new objects are drawn in. Indeed it can be argued that places only emerge as tourist places, stages of tourism, when they are performed.

In his study of what different tourists 'do' and 'think' at the Taj Mahal, Edensor observed diverse styles of walking, gazing, photographing and memory work enacted within this strictly regulated site. Western package tourists, western backpackers and domestic Indian tourists perform this world famous attraction in different fashions. For instance, while photographic performances of western package tourists are shaped by 'western' romantic and colonial representations circulated by the tourist and media industries, Indians' camera work is shaped by shared notions of collective pleasure and 'witness'. The Taj Mahal is contingently produced through such diverse, conflicting narrative performances that travel along different 'routes': 'To conceive Taj Mahal to have some essential character is to ignore the polyphonous interpretations and diverse practices that centre upon it.'²¹ The 'performance turn' is thus not opposed to representations, it is rather 'more-than-representational'. It seeks 'critically to complement interpretations of the world that prioritises representations by engaging a path through which those representations may be negotiated in everyday life.'²² The performative spaces of tourism are not only effects of encounters between 'naked'

bodies and material landscapes, they are also inscribed with pre-existing cultural stories, memories, norms, fantasies, family networks, (post)colonial relations and commodity chains, and haunted by war and terror. These are not necessarily 'present' in place but they have *effects* in place. This is particularly evident with so-called 'movie-induced tourism', where 'imaginary geographies' seen and circulated on film and TV choreograph tourists' actual routes, performances and interpretations in places.²³ This is also the case with political events displayed and circulated globally on the Internet and television, an example being the recent publication of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper and subsequently throughout the world. The number of Danish tourists who have booked a package tour to Turkey and Muslim countries in the Middle East at this time of year compared to the same period last year has halved, and the tourism industry is blaming the cartoons. Thus the tourism industry in Turkey and other Muslim countries is affected negatively by a faraway event that was supposed to be local but ended up being 'global news'.

The 'performance turn' destabilizes semiotic readings where places and objects are seen as signifying social constructs that can be unveiled through authoritative cultural readings rather than in terms of how they are used and lived with in practice. In tourism studies' and cultural geography's traditions of 'representationalism' and the orthodoxy of qualitative interviews, even in studies of embodied practices, 'what really matters is *talk* ... talk is made to stand in for all the complexities and subtleties of embodied practice',²⁴ In contrast, the methods of the 'performance turn' are more or less 'ethnographic' in nature, 'non-representational' by being busy, empirical commitments to doings near-at-hand, in ordinary and professional settings, and through material encounters.'²⁵ Studies explore how embodied, sensuous, active, technologised bodies

perform ‘the now’ through concrete bodily engagement with material and symbolic environments, objects and technologies.

The ‘performance turn’ is committed to ethnographic observations because most everyday practices take the form of habit, derived in practice. Much social life is conducted unintentionally and habitually. Humans seldom ‘think-to-act’²⁶. This also explains why many interviewees’ accounts of their everyday practices are ambiguous, incomplete and sometimes almost lifeless. Compared to qualitative interviews, ethnographic observations better capture the bodily, enacted, technologised and ‘here-and-now’ quality of practices and performances because they focus on immediate physical doings rather than retrospective, detached and ‘intellectual’ talk about how and why such performances take place, and what they mean. Moreover, research has shown that there can be significant differences between what people ‘do’ in practice and what they say they do in intense face-to-face interviews, where faces always appear at risk, so people might bend the truth a little in order to present themselves in a better light.²⁷ However, most tourism ethnographies use qualitative interviews as a supplement to observation, so that tourists’ personal views on their performances can be analyzed.

The limitation of the ‘performance turn’ and its use of ethnographically inspired methods is the restriction of its analytical gaze to particular places (most often famous attractions) and the performances unfolded *within* them. In fairness it should be noted that some studies emphasise how tourist places are made and remade as they are ‘toured’ by particular modes of mobility, cultural scripts and embodied performances.²⁸ While recognising that localised tourism performances are framed by and draw upon global flows (of stories, objects, people, images, materials and so on), most ethnographies of tourism performances have not yet departed from the deep-rooted

anthropological idea that ‘ethnographies’ take place *within* bounded sites. Being based on ‘*single-site ethnographies*’, these studies do not ‘follow flows’ between sites. Hence, they are incapable of capturing the role of such flows in enabling particular sites. In the next section we suggest how so-called ‘multi-site ethnography’ and mobile methods can remedy this.²⁹

MULTI-SITED ETHNOGRAPHIES AND MOBILE METHODS

As James Clifford famously argued, ethnography needs to leave behind its preoccupation with discovering the ‘roots’ of cultural and social forms and instead trace the ‘routes’ that produce and reproduce them. Much social theory at the end of the twentieth century emphasised the increased mobility of objects, people, information and meanings that transformed the world into a ‘single field of persistent interaction and exchange’³⁰ and the need to develop methodological frameworks for dealing with ‘the global’ as an emerging new social reality. Most persistently, Appadurai early advocated the need to engage with global scopes and flows of people, images, technologies, money and ideas.³¹ Following Appadurai, George Marcus has argued that the investigation of increasingly interdependent and fluid phenomena makes it necessary to ‘move out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space.’ According to Marcus, such a ‘multi-sited ethnography’ must be ‘designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations’ to follow people, things, metaphors, stories, lives and conflicts in motion.³² To some extent, ‘multi-sited ethnography’ is ‘old news’ in some parts of the social sciences. For instance, Hannerz argues that migration researchers always have preferred ethnographic

studies at ‘both ends’ of the migration flow.³³ However, Marcus’s more programmatic suggestion of a ‘multi-sited ethnography’ of the world system has been important for the use of multi-sited studies in wider cultural studies of society.

In consumption studies, multi-sited approaches have produced interesting studies of the ‘traffic in/of things’ in relation to transnational commodity chains.³⁴ For instance, Cook *et al.* trace the flow of ordinary consumer goods such as the papaya fruit and the West Indian hot pepper sauce through complex transnational networks between consumers, producers and retailers. Other multi-sited studies trace the production and consumption of green beans, tourism souvenirs and ‘global news’.³⁵

Such multi-sited studies of things-in-motion uncover some of the different meanings and effects that objects can have in different places and on the move. They de-fetichize apparently trivial consumer goods by showing the ‘material links that cut across boundaries between people’³⁶ and highlight the importance of recognizing the distinct and variant effects and attitudes related to such movements in different social and cultural contexts. In doing so, these studies provide a more reflexive research praxis by shifting attention from the inherent meanings of objects, places, images and texts to the contested ‘productions of various representations as moments for situated reading and interpretation by all actors’ (including the researcher!).³⁷

Paradoxically, multi-sited methods have not been widely applied in relation to the geographies of tourism performances and tourism studies more broadly. However, discussion of connections, flows and mobilities is gradually entering tourism theory. This is particular evident in Sheller and Urry’s edited compilation on ‘places in play’:

[M]any different mobilities inform tourism, shape the places where tourism is performed, and drive the making and unmaking of tourist destinations. Mobilities of people and objects, airplanes and suitcases, plants and animals, images and brands, data systems and satellites, all go into ‘doing’ tourism. Tourism also concerns the relational mobilizations of memories and performances, gendered and racialised bodies, emotions and atmospheres. Places have multiple contested meanings that often produce disruptions and disjunctures. Tourism mobilities involve complex combinations of movement and stillness, realities and fantasies, play and work.³⁸

Multi-sited methods may here provide helpful tools for uncovering tourism’s many ‘sites of production’, investigating the various settings in which tourist materials and meanings are consumed and produced, and highlighting the ‘complex combinations’ between sites, meanings and materials. A multi-sited approach can help us think of tourism as taking place not between spaces of home and spaces of leisure but in *networks*.

This approach resembles what Joy Hendry calls ‘globology’, that is, studies ‘identifying and describing discourses held by people with different ways of defining themselves but who communicate through new global forms of technology and exist only because of these forms of technology.’³⁹ Alongside migration and electronic media, tourism is one of the most significant forces in transforming the globe into one coherent field of interaction. And, like migrant cultures, tourism can be seen as a culture of circulation and connections. Both:

transgress the boundaries of home and away, well-known and imagined, by creating specific irregularities because both viewers and images are in simultaneous in circulation. Neither images nor viewers fit into circuits of audiences that are easily bound within local, national or regional spaces.⁴⁰

And, like migrants, tourists are also parts of networks and circuits that are not easily located within national, local or regional spaces but encompass both localized performances in place as⁴¹ well as global processes. Moreover, such circuits also break down the barrier between the known and the fantasized. As Appadurai puts it: ‘imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape’..

Making multi-sited ethnographies of tourism performance, we argue, requires a repertoire of ‘mobile methods’ and the examination of five types of interdependent mobilities that reinforce and support each other in non-predictable ways: *physical* travel (of people), physical movement of *objects*, *imaginative* travel (through images and memories), *virtual* travel (on the Internet) and *communicative* travel (through telephones, e-mails, text messages and so on).⁴² These mobilities are not free floating within a frictionless space but depend upon, circulate and travel through physical ‘moorings’. They include physical places like home environments, Internet cafés, airports and communications technologies such as mobile phones and laptops.⁴³ Applying a multi-sited approach to tourism performances would then involve tracing the multiple mobilities and ‘moorings’ that make tourism happen across often geographical dispersed spaces. We call this ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’.

We argue that one aspect of ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ is to follow the ‘footsteps of tourists’, either by asking tourists to ‘track’ their movement through time-space in time geography-inspired diary form or by physically travelling *along* with them, making observations of and doing interviews with them. Both methods (especially if they are combined) pay attention to how and where tourists move, what places they visit and perform, both on and off the beaten track. This might highlight how tourism performances not only take place at famous sights and involve exotic practices, but also happen across multiple sites (‘moorings’), ordinary as well as extraordinary, where many *mundane* everyday practices are also performed. This exercise may prove helpful in the long overdue process of de-exoticising tourism theory.

Another aspect is to follow ‘communication flows’, or flows of digital/virtual travel, and ‘object flows’. ‘Mobile tourism ethnographies’ need to follow the networked flows of e-mails, text messages, telephone calls, postcards, photographs, souvenirs and so on that tourists make, produce, purchase and circulate to their social networks at home or elsewhere, both while on the move and when at home again. Following such flows makes it possible to explore both how ‘local’ tourism geographies circulate in distant places as ‘place myths’, and how tourists use travel tales, images and consumer goods to (re)produce social networks and decorate their homes and bodies.

The remainder of this article shows how multi-site ethnography and mobile methods can be used in practice by discussing how we intend to follow tourism performances between the Orient (Turkey and Egypt) and northern Europe (Denmark) as enacted and circulated by Danish tourists.

HOW TO FOLLOW FLOWS

Mass tourism has become increasingly ‘exotic’, made possible by low-cost charter tourism and cheap air tickets. Faraway and ever more ‘exotic’ holidays are becoming widespread and within reach, as new destinations make their entry into the mass tourism market. Strolls through the bazaars of Istanbul and cruises on the Nile are packaged into the sea, sand and sun culture of traditional forms of organised mass tourism. While several studies have explored how nineteenth-century travellers produced and consumed the Orient in and through literature, paintings, photographs and cameras,⁴⁴ there is little knowledge of how contemporary tourism’s global flows (re)produce the Orient as a particular embodied theatre of western desires and fantasies that sustains power relations and identities between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Rather than making another ‘textual’ reading of the Orient, we explore how the Orient is produced through various hybrid practices and mobilities. Following Said and Gregory,⁴⁵ a great deal of analysis treats Orientalism as a ‘regime of knowledge’ and focuses upon the workings of institutions, discourses and texts. We argue for a more practice- and agent-oriented view by focusing on how hegemonic discourses are translated into everyday practices and enter into the habitual spaces of ordinary experience.⁴⁶ Tourists are not just consuming ‘imaginative geographies’, they also co-produce and co-distribute them, especially now, given the diffusion of camera phones, mobile phones and the Internet.

This research project employs ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ to explore how Danish tourists perform, and make themselves at home in, the Orient, weaving together ‘home’ and ‘away’, corporal, material, virtual, imaginative and communicative mobilities and connections. It traces the flows of images, narratives, people and things-in-motion that script, stage and circulate the Orient *and* touring tourists across multiple

sites. Giving illuminating attention to the fabric of everyday life and mundane, ‘homely’ practices, the real holiday experience is placed in the foreground as it takes place *before*, *during* and *after* the journey itself. This research thus combines ‘travel ethnographies’ (at various sites) with *home* ethnographies, which are connected by exploring how text messages, e-mails, photographs, telephone calls, souvenirs and consumer goods bridge home and away, absence and presence, being-here and being-there. Multi-sited ethnographies and mobile methods challenge the conventional idea that tourism research needs to take place at ‘attractions’ and that home is something that tourists leave entirely at home. Instead they highlight fluid connections between home and away.

Traditional single-site ethnographies of tourism performances at attractions suffer from the fact that most tourists spend very little time there before moving on. Researchers often end up glancing at *passing* flows and doing hurried interviews. As the anthropologist Edward Bruner reflects:

A key difficulty in studying tourists is methodological - the tourists move so fast through the sites that it is hard to keep up with them.... It is relatively easy to begin a discussion but in the middle of a sentence the tour leader announces that the group is moving on to the next site, and your informant has disappeared.... I felt that the only way for me to enter into tourist discourse would be to join the tour group. As a guide, I would be an insider and I could observe how the tourists actually experienced the sites and events to which they were exposed.⁴⁷

While one way to follow the footsteps of tourists over a sustained period of time is therefore to become a guide, a second is to participate as ‘tourist’ on a guided package tour – the strategy of this research project. Such a tour permits the researcher close proximity to a group of tourists for a fortnight or so, allowing time for casual conversation on the move, in-depth interviews while resting, and sustained observations of the diverse performances and sites that guides and tourists enact, visit and pass through. This means that qualitative interviews can be approached ethnographically, as they can take place while performances are being enacted and involve souvenirs, guidebooks, maps and available communications technologies.

Ethnographic observations involve examining how guides and tourists perform places through concrete micro-geographies that draws upon historical/national/global flows of ‘imaginative geographies’, of colonialism, terror, xenophobia, national discourses, popular culture and so on. How do guides, for example, stage the Orient as safe from terrorism and the Muslim as ‘seductive’ and trustworthy, or alternatively, as best avoided, in the aftermath of September the 11th, the recent Muhammad cartoon crisis (with Danish embassies burnt down in several Muslim countries), terror bombings in tourist destinations in Egypt in 2005 and 2006, and Muslim xenophobia in many European countries? What far-reaching flows and ‘place myths’ are ‘mobilised’ and ‘demobilised’ in this process? To what extent do tourists’ physical encounters with the Orient and the Muslim reproduce or challenge media-circulated place-myths? Such questions are particularly interesting because, somewhat paradoxically, Egypt and especially Turkey have become major tourist destinations for ‘cheap’ Danish mass tourism at the same time as a radical xenophobia towards Muslim people has been

produced in the Danish public sphere (although, as noted above, the recent cartoon crisis has radically reversed the situation).

‘Mobile tourism ethnographies’ should not only follow the bodies of tourists, but also their luggage and home possessions, which they carefully bring to their destination. There is a need to unpack the flows of food, drinks, mobile phones, cameras, toys, literature, music, medicines and clothes that couples and families transport to the Orient in order to make themselves at ‘home’ – in the double sense of holding on to one’s known world and fitting into a new home, making it ‘dwell-able’ and safe. The common idea that tourism is the opposite of everyday life and work also neglects the fact that tourists need to make themselves at home in a strange, foreign place and that they transport some of their home with them. This analysis is particularly significant in relation to Oriental destinations like Turkey and Egypt because, for many tourists, these places are very ‘different’ from their home geographies, as well as from traditional mass tourism destinations like Spain and Greece, and they are likely to be perceived as containing ‘risks’ in relation to food, hygiene, medical care and cultural norms for clothing and so on. Following John Berger, we can understand home as not being rooted in one particular physical place but rather as something that involves, and can be mobilised through, social habits, small daily rituals, precious objects, mundane technologies and significant others.⁴⁸ So home is part of tourists’ baggage and bodily performances: ‘Even when a traveler leaves home, home does not leave the traveler.’⁴⁹

In a similar fashion, the photographs tourists produce and the various souvenirs they buy, the pieces and the imaginative geographies of the Orient they transport *home* – to memorize, display and circulate the Orient to their friends and family members – are also analysed (see below). ‘Mobile tourism ethnographies’ need to trace the

complex flows that contingently travel in both directions between the host and guest cultures. This also involves an examination of how, and to what extent, tourists stay connected with their 'home' and social networks, distributed at various sites through mobile communications.

Recent years have seen a proliferation in communication technologies such as mobile phones, the Internet and Internet cafés that allows tourists to be in more or less constant touch with their absent ties through e-mails, text messages, photo messages and free voice-over telephony (e.g. Skype, www.skype.com). They are designed for mobility and geographically dispersed social networks. Nowhere do people seem busier calling and writing text messages than when in motion and transit. Molz's research, for instance, examines how e-mails and travel blogs connect disconnected round-the-world travelers and their social networks. They 'provide them with a stable address where they can always be contacted – so they are never lost, even when they are off the beaten track – and where they can stay in regular touch with friends and family.'⁵⁰

Such far-reaching communications blur distinctions between presence and absence, near and far, home and away. As Callon and Law maintain more generally, 'presence is not reducible to co-presence ... co-presence is both a location and a relation.'⁵¹ Examining what communication technologies (mobile/camera phones, laptops, digital cameras, etc.) travel with tourists and how they are used in practice illuminates tourists' 'connected presence' with people and places elsewhere: 'To inhabit such machines is to be connected to, or to be at home with, 'sites' across the world – while simultaneously such sites can monitor, observe, and trace each inhabited machine ... others being uncannily present *and* absent, here and there, near and distant, home and away, proximate and distant.'⁵² Such an approach cast light both on how

‘imaginative geographies’ are produced and circulated in and through lay geographies and personal representations that crisscross sites between home and away, as well as how tourist performances are increasingly being staged more or less live for an absent yet co-present audience. For instance, ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ should examine how tourist photography today might no longer be directed only at a future audience⁵³ but instead to a more or less instantaneous live audience, now that camera-phones, Internet cafés, e-mails and travel blogs have become the new ubiquitous material infrastructures that ‘timelessly’ transport images (technologies permitting!) over great distances. Is the new spatial-temporal order of tourist photography, and by implication many other tourism performances, one of ‘I am here’ rather than ‘I was here’?⁵⁴

Another well-established method of following flows and performances is time geography. Haldrup and Latham both use time geography-inspired diaries and diagrams to track the spatial-temporal rhythms and styles of city-dwellers and tourists’ mobility practices.⁵⁵ Following their attempts at using time geography in qualitative research, we shall also experiment with making diaries that on the one hand can follow and represent tourists’ corporeal movements (where, with whom and how do they move about and where do they make stops) and their communication practices and connections to ‘home’ (e-mailing, text/picture messages and so on), while on the other hand allow tourists to express their feelings subjectively towards the places they encounter. Such diaries are distributed on a number of package tours in which we do not participate. While qualitatively less rich than observations and interviews, they are less time-consuming and expensive and therefore a useful alternative if the aim is to work with a large sample.

Much tourism theory has been obsessed with places and practices that are extraordinary, exotic and clearly inscribed through signs as tourist places.⁵⁶ This is the major reason why tourism ethnographies have so far been mainly of attractions. But ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ and/or timespace diaries probably indicate that tourists spend much time outside ‘attractions’ and engage in various mundane, more or less pleasurable practices, such as eating, socialising, relaxing, shaving, bathing, waiting, shopping, being on buses and trains and so on. As consequence, ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ situate themselves not only at distinctive tourist sights, but also in more or less ‘ordinary’ tourist places (‘local’ restaurants, swimming pools and so on), and this includes places typified more by ‘global flows’ than by the ‘local’ culture, such as MacDonalds, Starbucks, western-style supermarkets, swimming pools and international hotel-chain restaurants. The latter will enable a discussion of how ‘Oriental’ tourist places are produced through western flows of desires and power relations, and how people use such western places to feel at home in strange world (perhaps partly because of pressure from their children!).

Internet cafés have proliferated tremendously in tourist places across the world within the last decade, illustrating the need for multi-sited ethnographies. Internet cafés are ‘moorings’ that ‘bridge’ sites of home and away, presence and absence, escape and responsibility. This research project undertakes detailed ethnographies of how package tourists use – or resist! – Internet cafés (and Internet-connected computers in hotel lobbies) to read their usual newspaper, send ‘postcard e-mails’ (perhaps attached with photographs), upload their travel/web blog, reply to postcard e-mails and maybe even work e-mails.

In addition to undertaking ethnographies of destination sites that afford connections to home, ‘mobile tourism ethnographies’ also need to take place in tourists’ private homes, where flows of ‘imaginative geographies’ – marketing material, political news, souvenirs, photographs and travel tales – are consumed, seen, worn, displayed, performed and disseminated to other households. *Pre*-travel interviews can reveal some of the Oriental ‘place myths’ (risks of terror, cultural stereotypes and so on) that travel along with tourists to actual destinations. Tourists never just travel *to* places: their mind-sets travel *with* them.⁵⁷ We may note how the ‘imaginative geographies’ of tourism are as much about ‘home’ as about faraway places.

Post-travel research is particularly interesting from a multi-sited ethnography perspective since it can document how tourism performances effect, and sometimes take place, in sites that are spatio-temporally remote from particular tourist places. At home people perform tourist memories, travel tales and popular imaginative geographies by chatting over souvenirs and holiday snaps displayed on fridges, work desks, mobile phones, computers and so on. Post-travel home ethnographies need to explore the after-life – storing, displaying and circulation – of souvenirs, photographs and e-mail postcards, which ties in to the increasing significance that cultural geographers are attributing to home geographies (see Blunt, 2004), including personal photography (Rose, 2003).⁵⁸ Do souvenirs travel well, or do they change meaning with their movement and displacement? For instance, how are digital photographs stored, used, exhibited and circulated? Are holiday photographs more widely exhibited and distributed now that e-mails transport them timelessly and web pages, web-blogs and travel-blogs exhibit them globally? Post-travel research thus destabilizes the common

idea in tourism theory and cultural geography that tourism and everyday life/home belong to different ontological worlds.

Finally, such post-travel research allows us to explore to what degree tourism visits change peoples' pre-conceived mental geographies about the Muslim world and Muslims living in Denmark. One way to do this is by exploring the souvenirs and personal photographs tourists bring home and disseminate. For instance, do their photographs – and their oral/textual accounts of them – contribute to the production of 'practical Orientalism'⁵⁹ by reproducing historical Oriental place-myths, the tourism industry's exotic images or downright racist images?

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that the recent embracing of 'performance' and non-representational theory in cultural geographies of tourism has produced illuminating accounts of the multiple doings and enactments at play in modern tourism. However, we then argued that this 'performance turn' has not so far developed a full methodological repertoire capable of grasping the many mobilities that produce and are tied into the staging and performing of tourism. In spite of its innovative conceptual work, the 'performance turn' has been trapped by 'the local' and by *single*-sited ethnographies. Limiting our attention to a priori scripted 'tourist places' does not produce new knowledge about the role of tourism and travel in contemporary societies, but contains the danger of continuing a blind reproduction of 'received knowledge' of what tourism is and should be about.

To remedy this, we have argued that geographies of tourism performances can be constructively developed by broadening the scope of the methods and sites that are

employed and researched. This article has stressed how multi-sited methods and mobile methods can be helpful in this regard, and we have suggested that we should speak of 'mobile tourism ethnographies'. With inspiration from multi-sited research, it has been argued that tourist researchers should expand the range of research sites not only to include 'tourist places' (resort areas, attractions and so on), but also the flow spaces of transport and the spaces of private homes. This, we argue, will allow us better to capture the network-like character of tourism performances.

Enlarging the scope of the particular sites chosen for study in this way and enriching our methodological creativity with the way we engage with them will, we argue, not only produce illuminating accounts of the cultural geographies of tourism performances, but also, and more generally, make us understand better the role of tourism within the broader context of modern everyday life. By highlighting networks, paths, chains and threads between a complex multiplicity of sites, rather than examining in detail performances and practices within single sites, such an approach acknowledges the network-like character of how contemporary cultural geographies are produced, networked and performed.

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² See N. Thrift, 'Performance and Performativity: a geography of unknown lands', J. Duncan, N. Johnson and R. Schein, eds., *A Companion to Cultural Geography* (London, Blackwell, 2004) pp 121-36.

³ R. Shields, *Places on the Margin. Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London, Routledge, 1991).

⁴ G. Hughes, G., 'Tourism and the semiological realization of space.', in G. Ringer (Ed.) *Destinations: Cultural landscapes of tourism*, (London, Routledge, 1998) pp. 17-32.

⁵ A. Franklin, A., and M. Crang 'The trouble with Tourism and Travel Theory', *Tourist Studies*, **1/1** (2001), pp. 5-22.

⁶ G. E. Marcus, 'Ethnography in/of the World System. The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography', *Annual Review of Anthropology* **24** (1995) pp. 95-117.

⁷ J. Urry, 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', in *Mobility and the Cosmopolitan Perspective* (Munich, SFB 536, 2004). K. Hannam, M. Sheller and J. Urry, 'Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings', *Mobilities*, **1/1** (2006) pp. 1-22.

⁸ T. Cresswell, 'The Production of Mobilities', *New Formations* **43** (2001) pp. 11-25. T. Cresswell, *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: the Politics of Representation in a Globalized World* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2002).

⁹ See studies such as I. Cook et al., 'Follow the Thing: Papaya', in: *Antipode* **36/4** (2004) pp. 642-64 and 'Follow the Thing: West Indian hot pepper sauce', paper to 'Food and Mobility symposium', Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University 12-13 November. P. Crang, C. Dwyer and P. Jackson, 'Transnationalism and the spaces of commodity culture', *Progress in Human Geography* **27** (2003) pp. 438-56. U. Hannerz, 'Being there...and there...and...there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography', *Ethnography* **4**, (2003) pp. 201-16. J. Hendry, *The Orient Strikes back. A Global View of Cultural Display*, (Oxford, Berg, 2001) and 'An Ethnographer in the Global Arena: globography perhaps?' *Global Networks* **3** (2003) pp. 497-512.

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¹¹ See research papers such as T. Edensor, 'Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism – (Re)producing Tourist Space and Practice', *Tourist Studies*, **1/1** (2001) pp. 59-81. L. Malam, L., 'Performing Masculinity on the Thai Beach Scene', *Tourism Geographies* **6/4** (2004) pp. 455-71. A. Chronis, 'Coconstructing heritage at the Gettysburg storyscape', *Annals of Tourism Research* **32/2** (2005) pp. 386-406. J. Larsen, 'Families Seen Photographing: The Performativity of Tourist Photography', *Space and Culture* **8/4** (2005) pp. 416-34. T. Mordue, 'Tourism, Performance and social exclusion in "Olde York"', *Annals of Tourism Research* **32/1** (2005), pp. 179-98.

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